GRADUATION THESIS,

BY

FRANCIS JOHN DE QUINCEY.

1849

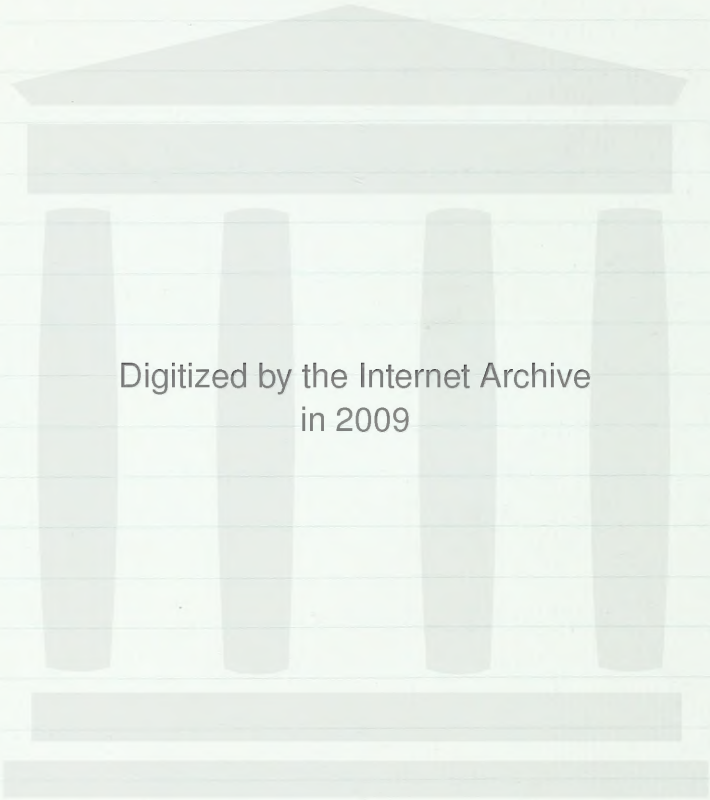
NOT TO BE BORROWED

~~I. VII. 23~~

A chip of the old block -
and Cuthbert Spay - worthy of Compeer

Woodman's appendix very interesting

Francis John De Quincey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On the Religious Objections to the use of Chloroform in Obstetric Medicine.

By

Francis John de Quincey.

31st March, 1849.

2.

Sir Philip. "Look at the summits of all the trees around us, how they move! And the loftiest the most so. Nothing is at rest within the compass of our view but the grey moss upon the Park Pales. Let that moss eat away the dead oak; but let it not be compared with the living one."

From a Conversation between Sir Philip Sidney & Lord Brooke.

4.

Nothing is more calculated to diminish our good opinion of the probity and disinterestedness of our fellow man, than taking a glance at the history of inventions and discoveries. The fate of nearly every originator has been that of Promatheus in the ancient story: and few indeed have been the inheritors of genius who have not also been compelled to endure the vulture and the rock.

Excepting for the purpose of illustration, there is little need to recur at any length to the history that has preceded the full establishment and recognition of our brightest and most highly valued achievements. In truth it has been in all ages the same in it's intimate nature; however the changed spirit of the time, or the circumstances of each particular case, may have altered it's external manifestations. For although people raise their voices against the imprisonment of Galileo

and the persecution of the Lollards, we, in our own time and in our own country, perceive men engaged in the same work of detraction, exhibiting the same spirit of malevolence and calling to their aid the same antiquated system of prejudice and of bigotry; for the like purpose of crushing those who are seeking after truth and endeavouring to do good.

The two great discoveries in medical science by men now living, namely, the reflex theory of Marshall Hall and the theory of Cytogenesis of Schwann, Schleiden and Goodsir, furnish excellent examples of the truth of this opinion. And in the yet nascent discovery of the application of Chloroform to Anaesthetic purposes the same course has been pursued.

However consoling it may be to reflect that Harvey, Jenner, Muscagni, Bell, Hunter and Paré, and indeed the bearer of every name illustrious in the records of our profession,

have endured the same fate; in like manner have had to war against prejudice and against ignorance; and that the ultimate glory of each has always been proportional to his early antagonism: and although it is equally consoling to think that the discovery of printing and the increasing enlightenment of the world have placed it out of the power of any set of men permanently and successfully to combat novelty, or to prevent new ideas from spreading as their merits may deserve:—it is not the less to be regretted that there still exists a large class of mankind, who considering the words old and good as synonymous, can admire nothing that has not upon it the dust of forty generations; and to whom novelty is a mere rock of offence. And such constitute one of the two classes that oppose Chloroform. Far be it from me to depreciate the caution which rationally and properly exists, as regards the

admission of new theories into medicine as into other sciences. What I would object to is the rejection of facts, illustrated and supported by daily experience; from attachment to an ancient opinion, as in the case of the reflex theory; or on account of a fanciful interpretation of a divine sentence, as witnessed in the history of chloroform.

But while we can only regret the existence of such a class as I have now spoken of; and while we may still be permitted to respect them, as holding their opinions in sincerity, though in error, there is another for whom I confess myself to have neither sympathy nor respect. And within this body are to be found the most violent opponents of chloroform. Under the mask of moral or physical objections, they entertain a secret but deeply rooted prejudice against every thing that comes from a particular place or individual, or with which personally

they have no concern.

But such surely mistake the objects of man's life. They are broadly declared to be two: to do good and to discover truth. And these are set forth as the end of all men's lives: not of a sept or country. We ought then to possess a Catholic spirit towards the good and the truth, no matter whence it may come.

As those of whom I speak are unable to fulfil the latter of these objects, so they appear unwilling to perform the former. And thus they pass through life; detraction and opposition their sole offering to others who are able and disposed to do both. To seem to the Promethean fable the world is their rock on which they would bind the man of genius; their own ambition being to enact the part of the vulture, and gnawing at his vitals, to deprive him of his heaven derived power, of speaking directly to the souls of men.

There is in Medicine, as in all other sciences whose outer boundary is beyond the circle of what is exact or physical, an eminent necessity for perfect freedom from prejudice and for dispassionate consideration. It has now reached a point in its progress when many discoveries may be looked for which can not be clearly and incontrovertibly demonstrated to our senses; when more must be acknowleged as established by reasoning processes than can actually become visible to our eyes. As members, then, of a liberal profession, it is absolutely incumbent on us to examine scrupulously for ourselves the arguments as well as the facts which lead to a particular line of practice: and while we are called upon to decline the adoption of illsupported and unnecessary hypotheses, we are equally bound imperatively to take our stand by that at which our judgement commends. Not acting thus we are neglecting the

station we claim. We donot perform its duties and consequently we are unworthy of its privileges. We do not attend to the sacred duty which the very oratine of our Profession imposes on us and which ought to constrain us to adopt every safe and possible means within our reach to relieve suffering and to shorten disease. Every profession has its requirements: this is the initially important one demanded at our hands.

In such aworld of progress as this, the study of existing facts, though vastly important, is not all it is ourduty to attend to: our memory and our faculties of observation, though of gigantic use, do not complete the circle of our mental endowments. The use of our reasoning powers, as men, must aid us, as medical practitioners, in calling into question and deciding upon the relative claims of discoverers and their opponents. We must weigh the arguments on both sides, if there be arguments on both sides, and a verdict well and truly give according

to the evidence which is before us.

And hitherto has this been the course pursued? Have discoverers received due honor in our profession? Have their improvements been adopted readily and their merits recognized and rewarded? Has merit been the sole criterion by which we have been guided in our decision?

To each and all of these questions a simple No and for historical truth compels us to reply in the negative. The history of the progress of medicine unveils as sad tale to the contrary: Exhibits a dark picture of ideas good and excellent in themselves combatted unworthily by bigotry or by simple absurdity.

Even in this age, as I said before, we find the old spirit existing among a large body who are nominally allied with us in prosecuting the Medical profession. Although to the east it is somewhat more tame than of yore: and Smithfield and the Castle Hill have

more harmless use now than as the sites for burning those unhappy beings who disagree in their opinions with the majority of their neighbours. But still the spirit that is abroad is the same. And while, as is expressed in my motto, all the world around us is changing, there are yet to be found men who are willing to represent the grey moss upon the bark pales and are desirous of crushing the life out of the living oak. There are decent ones enough encumbering our steps, and if they would be content with preying upon each all would be well. But they desire to lay hands upon the living, breathing and yearning being who is to carry on the good work, to achieve new victories and to gain new light.

My chief reason for writing this thesis is to protest against these people.

~~[illegible]~~

Before passing to the more immediate subject of my thesis it may there be well to take a brief glance at the history of the more important innovations into Medical Science: from which we may draw some useful and practical conclusions in relation to the question to be afterwards discussed; as well as in regard to the general principles which ought to guide us in the investigations and inquiries ~~[illegible]~~ that at various times it will be our duty to make. For this is an age of discoveries: and we have much reason to believe that with the means of research now [illegible] our Science will rapidly advance! This must ever be done by the progressive enlightenment and development the Almighty has granted us suggesting, deviations from the old paths of error. Man's soul has too great an affinity with it's Maker,

to strong a desire to strike into being the eternal spark that shall slay death, to suffer ignorance to continue longer than it can help. He is feverish and restless, every moment the dull hollow sound of the earth flung upon his coffin seems to moan in his ears, and he is agony haunted until he upreares a great thought: then comes another and another that in the universal movement join. And if it is no answer to this opinion to say with Mr. Punch of Liverpool "that we have done very well without improvements, and may do very well again and therefore they are not to be adopted". For this is untrue, seeing that we are surrounded on all hands with improvements. The plan of "pooh pooh-ing" an opinion with which we disagree is an old one, and in many cases not devoid of advantages; but magna est veritas et prevalebit is a still older maxim: and the corollary is legitimately drawn from the nature of the premise. As reasonable was the

attempt of the celebrated Mrs Partington to keep out the German Ocean with a mop, as this mode of attempting to stop the progress of Chloroform. If persevered in the same result will follow. The Sea will advance and will sweep away those who strive to retard its flow with means so preposterously inadequate. We see even now many signs that the public are getting in advance of the profession upon this subject: and if those members who still object to chloroform do not take warning in time they will find to their cost that the political world is not the only one where we may witness dethronements.

I propose to pass over the early history of Medicine, altho' it affords ample material for remark: and more especially the quarrels of the 16th Century between the Galenists and the Chemists. For here there was much wrong on both sides.

But coming to more recent times I first notice, as most important, the great discovery of Harvey. Frowned on by those in power, ridiculed by the weak, and pitied by the pseudo great, he pursued his work and perfected it under the cold shade of neglect. For years it was held to be false, he had no encouragement for his labors and he died with his greatness nearly unacknowledged. But he was an memorable instance of how far one man, serene in suffering as in glory, can go to defy his kind. In his own time those who favored his views were thought mad. But the man who now denies his greatness and the truth of his theory! Where is he?

Let us look at Jenner and his discovery of vaccination. And while we look let us smile at the rhapsodies of those who opposed him and at the idea that it was a bold defiance of God's holy laws. And Mr Park and Mr Gream join us: yet the analogy is perfect between the pamphlets of Messrs

Park & Lyeam and those of Macfey, Rowley & Delafaye. The former on Chloroform, the latter on Vaccination.

Again, Regard the improvements introduced into Surgery by Ambrose Paré. The friend of Kings and the Idol of Armies, he could not be neglected or forgotten while he lived: but being dead, one* under Authority tells us the Science soon reverted to the state of degradation in which he found it. And as a still more striking circumstance we find that one great innovation which he introduced, the use of the ligature in haemorrhage, had been previously taught and practised by Celsus and Albucasis; the one 1500, the other 400 years his predecessor.

The discoveries of Sir C. Bell brought out a perfect storm of opposition from all quarters. More than usual violence characterised the opposition to them; and yet who now doubts the sensory endowments of the posterior columns of the spinal cord, or the motory and efferent properties of the anterior?

* Professor Miller.

The history of the introduction of Jesuits bark, whose anti periodic powers are now probably better established than the virtues of any other article in the Materia Medica, exhibits a long controversy, first as to whether it was good for any thing; secondly, why it it acted; thirdly, how it acted; and fourthly, in Regard to the mode of exhibition. And it was not till its powers were shewn to be absolutely demonstratable facts that it was allowed its full rights. That is to say — its Merits were admitted when there was no merit in admitting them; but when certain obloquy fell on those who denied their existence.

The stethoscope long languished under the opprobrious name of inutile lignum: Dr. Elliotson was told that he could not diagnose a bit better with than without it: and that if he should be able to do this, he would treat disease no better. The lapse of time has given a very clear refutation of these opinions: setting aside the question, whether it

becomes professional men to practice in ignorance and in the dark, by mere empiricism, when a light and guide is within their reach.

But I will not extend the list. These instances show sufficiently well the course pursued in all cases of discovery or invention.

Although all people will not agree in considering the light afforded by the history of past events as a beacon for our guidance in the present time and as a prophet to vaticinate for us Regarding the shadowy future, it must I think be admitted that all this opposition is of great service in really promoting what it desires to repel. For man is by nature combative and competitive for good or evil: for good most. The discoverer must feel this or his mission can never be successful. Intellect battling with ignorance; energy destroying indolence; mind subduing matter; action, movement

and strength are elements of genius and receptivities of greatness as much as depth of thought and clearness of perception. The demigods of the antique age, the heros of the Grecian theogony were all competing, combative, antagonistic Intelligences; and fought always for Man against Ay Nas, Ogres and all savagery. The good they effected was thought worthy of an Apotheosis and they were lifted into the eternal heavens of man's heart. The labors of Hercules and the Titans should be regarded as Intelligences vanquishing ignorance; as the teachers and builders up of the temple of humanity. When deprived of competition the world only grows Conservative; when dumb of thinkers, it vociferates with empiricies. And how we detest the substitute! The One is intelligence in action, thought commanding matter: in a word it is antagonism against whatever is worth opposing, vanquishing and casting out. It is the objective;

cöperation only the subjective, the means whereby the intelligence affirms itself. The visible agent servant to the invisible power: the organic effects caused by the inorganic forces. The hands are secondary to the head: the indefinite elements must always generate the definite changes; as the thinker the worker, the master the man: for this is the true issue of these two words; and never until these conditions are reversed, until the nerves, arteries and veins change their purposes in brain economy and become superior to this brain, till ponderable matter causates imponderable elements shall the spirit of cöperation rise superior to that of opposition. But though this is the case it forms no justification for the infliction of wrong - or for the opposition to truth, which I have complained. Seen in its proper light it should only induce us to be thankful that there is an Almighty power

which both can and will spread truth and do good in spite of our efforts to conceal the one or thwart the other. On the progress we are permitted to make we may see an evidence of the divine goodness which seems to betoken the perfectibility of our ideas. And in our own science in common with others, there is hope for such a resuscitation. For although we cannot expect soon to see in it such glorious annihilments of the infinite creative power of Nature as we see in some other, yet we have the high authority of Dr. Alison, whose name is a guarantee for the steel-like soundness of the remarks, for saying, ~~that~~ we may reasonably hope that the course of time will bring with it such an augmentation to our present knowledge ~~that the~~ prevention or relief of all the suffering which we now regard as necessarily attendant on our physical constitution, will be

within our power. Is not this a wide and glorious field! And when a man like Dr Alison tells us that such a hope is neither irrational, Utopian, nor inconsistent with past progress, we may, I think, regard the matter as set at rest.

I now proceed to a consideration of the subject to which the title of my thesis is owing. That is, The Religious objections to the use of chloroform in Obstetric Medicine.

Juggernaut, I know, delights in tortures; and Molech, horrid king, besmeared with blood of human sacrifice and parents' tears, is described as taking pleasure in the cries of those suffering pain: yet it appears at first sight absurd to suppose ~~that~~ and one could argue that the Christian Religion, whose only sacrifice is a broken spirit, and whose essence is loving kindness to all men, can be so construed as to refuse us permission to avail ourselves of every means in our power for the

alleviation of the ills under which we labour. But it is a widely different thing to study the world as it is and the world as it ought to be: and for all practical purposes of real life we are bound to take the former condition of affairs as the subject of our study. In the present case we find a band of men in, as well as out, your profession declaiming against the use of chloroform in midwifery because of the interpretation of two words in the 16th verse of the 3rd Chapter of Genesis. Dr. Simpson has taken the trouble to trace out the meanings of these words where they occur in other places in the bible, with the view of proving that they do not mean to imply the necessity of physical pain during parturition. But if Dr. Simpson considers the form of expression, used in this verse and so frequently elsewhere in the bible, as an imperative sentence and not as a simply prophetic one, I cannot help thinking he has proved a little

too much. For by proving that their meaning should be rendered "Muscular Contraction" he has, if, as I said before, he considers the verse a command, debarred himself for ever from the use of turning, the forceps, the air-tractor, the Cæsarian section and embryotomy; inasmuch as all these imply the abridgment or abolition of muscular contraction. So that if the verse is read in this way, a woman is to be allowed to die undelivered because she is guilty of the sin of having a contracted pelvis: a sin which is certainly not under her control; and the punishing of which would seem to war with the attributes of infinite wisdom, justice and love, which we regard as the brightest characteristics of the deity.

I do not think that either Muscular contraction or physical pain is meant; but simply sorrow, or unhappiness throughout life. My own opinion is that in the form of expression "in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children" there is no

command, but a simple prophetic intimation that woman would never be perfectly happy: that this is pre-paid ~~[illegible]~~ allegorically by saying she should perform her chief function – parturition – in sorrow: that is in sorrow of mind. For it seems unreasonable to suppose we would be intrusted with the execution of our own punishment: that a solemn curse would be pronounced and then left to depend upon the caprice of the condemned. But if the meaning be, as I suppose, sorrow extending through life, then, do what we will, the curse remains. In like manner, man is condemned to eat of the fruit of the ground in sorrow all the days of his life. Now if the mere acts of mastication and deglutition are pointed at, we neither do nor can fulfil the curse. Nay, what, in this sense, ought to be a curse, is a positive blessing: for eating, as we all know, is one of the greatest pleasures we enjoy. But if it simply means that

unhappiness shall be his lot in this world, then is the curse fulfilled and not by any possibility to be evaded.

And we are strengthened in this view if we judge this curse according to the spirit of Christianity and according to the revealed character of its divine author. Do not let us believe that our Heavenly Father desires pain or takes pleasure in its infliction upon us. Again I say I know well that the laws of Moloch require sacrifices to him; and I know that of Juggernaut involve death and suffering. But I do not and cannot believe that the Father of our Saviour can do other than rejoice in what saves the sheep of his pasture, from anguish and from tortures. In truth I cannot but think that the entire history of the fall is to be read allegorically. Under the name of the serpent who doubts that the devil, or spirit of Evil is meant? And that the forbidden fruit was something

widely differing from mere edible
vegetable products. Why then are we
to consider that in one part more is meant
than meets the ear, while we must
read the rest literally? It is admitted
on all hands that God is infinitely just
and true: let us see whether this curse
taken literally is consistent with
justice and truth. It was directed
against Eve and her descendants;
not against the Ancestress apart:
it was addressed to that woman who
was mother of all the nations of the
earth, and to all those who proceeded
from her. Yet we find that in the
Black and in the Aboriginal
American races the sufferings of
parturition are unknown. I am
not aware of any reason why white
women should be more exposed
than blacks to suffer from a curse
pronounced by their Common
Creator against their common
race. Unless indeed Mr Park and
such as he deny that black women

are included in the curse, not being human beings. In this case let these self-styled religious gentlemen look to it. For such an opinion they will find no audience in this country. Or, again, unless they affirm that white and Civilised and Christian women are more wicked than their black fellow creatures. This of course is the very antipole of the truth; but in the curse were it the fact, I can discover no gradation of punishment, according to the amount of wickedness. It seems on a par with the latter part of the curse which declares that in sorrow shalt thou eat of the ground all the days of thy life. This, it is quite clear cannot be understood literally, from what I said before; and inasmuch as by divorce or by insanity many are deprived of the power of feeling sorrow. Again it would appear that another part of the curse we are permitted to fulfil by proxy and that we may eat of

the sugar and of the bread and drink of the wine and of the tea which are prepared by the sweat of other peoples' brows. If Mr. Park and those who agree with him, are sincere in their objections, why do they not go and perform their part of the curse to the letter. But such truly cannot fashion to themselves a religion of mercy, and not sacrifice. Then also why should this curse fall so heavily on some, so lightly upon others. Why should one woman perish miserably, after hours of bitter torture; while another shall be a joyful mother, devoid of a single pain; and a third shall never have a child at all. Surely the curse did not command that the sins of all should be expiated by the sufferings of a few; even if the sins of the Race could be atoned for by individuals.

But upon these cold-blooded pseudo-religionists, who would call upon us to believe in such contradictions; and who think we can serve our

Religion and our God by such absence of feeling, such disgusting inhumanity.

Further, such a reading would tend to pollute the holy name by attaching to it the incompatible terms of just and cruel, good and sanguinary. For not only would such a view of the spirit of the passage do away with all midwifery for ever, making it wrong to interfere with the process in the slightest degree; but it would do away with all Medicine: seeing that the great end and object both of Medicine & Hygiéna is the prolongation of life; which we should be forbidden to attempt by the 19th Verse of the same Chapter, if it is to be read literally. And on this subject there is a strange anomaly with these Anti Chloroformists. They do not deny that it may be an excellent thing in tic douloureux or in an amputation; but it is not to be admitted in the worst and

most frightful of all pains, in the agonies of labor. But how inconsistent! If one part of the curse is to be understood in this spirit, surely the rest ought also. To whom is it given that he shall say of two equal sentences, understand this one literally; judge that according to a spirit gathered elsewhere? If we decide upon one part in this light; then upon all. And thus we are bound not to attempt to save men from death. Now this being the end of medicine, to admit the force of the curse, is to admit our Profession to be one mass of iniquity; the practice of it an mockery, a delusion and a snare. It is to admit that every particle of animal food we eat is a sin; that every day in winter and in autumn we break the curse by the absence of sweat upon our brow; that the retirement of old age from active work is contrary to God's law; that the senile euthanasia, which God permits, is in opposition to his own decree; and that every weeder in a

country farm violates the ~~dass~~ sentence by plucking up the thorns and the thistles which the land brings forth: While the unhappy and wicked woman who remains unmarried appears to break the command in four several ways, according to the following tabular statement.

I. She has no conception.
II. She brings forth no children.
III. Her desire is not to her husband.
IV. Her husband does not rule over her.

Now these things certainly form entirely new arguments against Malthusian principles, although they would not, I fear, be admitted as strictly within the rules of reasoning. But are we bound to believe that this verse is to be read literally? I have shewn the unlikelihood of it by the nature of the context. Let us now take a passage or two from other parts of the inspired volume, which may assist us in determining whether we must pass any ~~[illegible]~~

part of the bible according to the spirit or according to the letter.

First, then, let me ask, what would be the effect were we to understand literally the well known law, "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"? It would abolish Venesection for ever; and as for an amputation! Of course no Surgeon would risk his own life for the mere purpose of saving another's.

"A violent man shall not live out half his days." I know one, indeed I know several violent men, who are more than 35 years old: but I doubt whether I should make an impartial Jury believe me justified in making away with them, having no better Reason than this passage.

"The days of man's life are limited to 70 years, or occasionally 80. But surely no human being, unless indeed an Antichlorformist,

would consider on this account that a man who exceeds the latter age is unduly and improperly living; and that another is justified in destroying him! On the contrary, our sympathies are all enlisted in amazement by any outrage on one of venerable years.

I could multiply these examples ad infinitum: but these will show sufficiently well that the spirit is to be attended to more than the words, when the two are discordant: and not only the spirit of the particular passage, but the general tenor of the whole system of Christianity.

It may be said that these are quoted from men and that the curse was direct from God. But the Canons of the Church admit these writings as of inspired origin: indeed the whole of our religion depends upon their sacred, as derived, by the special grace of God, from

holy men directly inspired by Him.

To me, I speak with reverence and under correction, the whole story of the Temptation and of the Fall appears to be an allegory. We know the partiality of ancient times, especially in Eastern Countries, for the Hieroglyphic, or allegorical, mode of exhibition: and we find many instances of it in the Bible. The one with which we are more immediately concerned would seem to exhibit that the perfect happiness which was the lot of man till the fall, could no more belong to him and to his Race. The Knowledge of good and of evil appears chiefly to indicate that Universal feeling of the existence of an unknown and unseen world, and of an invisible power whose anger we deprecate and whose favour we implore, by the implanting of a Conscience

within us; whereby we are informed when we are right and when we are wrong. In the state of innocence before the fall nothing was thought of in the light of wrong; one sin only was within the grasp of those who dwelt in Paradise. It was committed; and that its results implied conscience is proved by the making of garments and by the hiding of themselves in the garden; or rather by whatever actions typified these. This consciousness, these misgivings, have existed ever since in all nations, at all times and in the mind of every person: for I cannot believe that any man with his senses entire disbelieves in the existence of a superior power, of a great first Cause.

I am supported in this opinion by the fact that such an idea as that of the Temptation is not peculiar to the Christian Religion.

The Mexicans have a very old tradition of the same kind and possess remains of drawings of what they call Cihuacohuati or the Serpent-Woman, whom they also consider to be the mother of Mankind. Humboldt, speaking about this Serpent-Woman, remarks, "these traditions remind us of the old traditions of Asia. In the woman and Serpent of the Aztecks, in Mexico, we think we see the Eve of the Semitic nations. In the Hindu Cut to pieces, the famous serpent, Kaliya, conquered by Vishnou, when he assumed the form of Crishna." And the Editor of the People's Dictionary of the Bible says in Reference to the same thing, "the whole suggests the idea that the account of the temptation in Genesis is, so to say, the literal translation of a hieroglyphic."

In this opinion I perfectly coincide. And this view of the matter

does not present the startling anomaly of the same being saving our souls by a gigantic sacrifice and torturing frail bodies with unspeakable anguish. It does not call upon us on the one hand to regard the grand scheme of Redemption brought to a point by the glorious atonement; and on the other behold a stern sentence of death and of sorrow, with the bitter aggravation that powers are given us to improve our position and yet that it is wicked to make use of them. The parable of the talents and the talents and abilities God has entrusted to us are not to be improved; that they are not to be considered in the same light as our other gifts; bestowed upon us that we may do good and do with them the work of God and of his Son,

as far as we possibly can. The last emphatic words of the parable should not be lost on those who oppose actions tending in this direction, who would boldly lay claim to the unobstructed possession of what may be called the vested rights of gain. "Unto every one which hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." This is clearly the application by Christ of the fact that progress and advancement and improvement constitute duties incumbent upon us: while standing still is reprobated and a punishment awarded to it.

I now proceed to notice those pamphlets I have just with which opposes the views I have taken; namely, those of Messrs Ingram and Peck. For Dr. Merriman through ignorance proceeds to the use of them on the Medical grounds, utterly irrevocables the not distant

Religious objections; laying it down as a rule that every substance formed by nature, or which can be formed by chemical manipulations, is proper to man for his use; and admitting that man has a mind capable of considering the properties of matter. That is to say — for I! Merriman's distinct yellow form will not permit him to speak out — man has a right to use anything to increase his pleasure or his pain, which his mind tells him it is fit and proper to use — and in relation to which his conscience does not interfere to tell him that its use is opposed to morality or to religion.

Was I to search for an example of the truth of the old French maxim, Ce n'est que la vérité qui blesse, I do not think I could find a more notable one than in the very crude and disjointed, angry and malicious little work of Mr. G. J.

Gream: a Philippic in which the arguments bear the same relation to the sneers and dogmatic assertions as Sir John Falstaff's bread did to his sack. A work so constituted it is difficult to pass under review; inasmuch as the salient points which can be animadverted upon are precisely those in which it is most deficient. But, sans de mieux, we must take Mr Gream as the chief exposition of the views of those who advocate needles & pain in punishment, and remark seriatim on his several imaginings. It would be well to arrange these remarks under certain heads; but the ideas contained are so heterogeneous in their nature that such an arrangement is impossible and I am compelled to notice them as they appear successively in the pages of his pamphlet. The first I shall notice, then, is the distinction which Mr Gream evidently wishes

Bassanio. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice; his reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them; and when you have them they are not worth the search.

to have drawn between natural and morbid or complicated labor. This he does partly by an extract from Denman and partly by his own remark, "especially during natural parturition." But can any thing more grossly irrational than this, he imagined! Can any one suppose that what is morally wrong for one form of labor, is morally right for another, the two kinds differing only, as regards this question, in amount of pain? Then, consider the extreme vanity and presumption of one thus setting himself up as a judge of when pain becomes injurious; at what precise time it is proper to do away with it. Either pain is an evil or it is not. If it is an evil, as we maintain, then is it right it should be removed as soon as possible: if not; then have we no right to interfere with it in any degree. If we are to believe any pain, surely all. Is it less the duty of the

Physician to prescribe for a case of Chronic Bronchitis, than for one of acute peritonitis, because the former is attended with little, the latter with intense suffering?! In like manner, if Chloroform is to be used at all, let it not be with the wretched proviso, that the pain is severe enough: as though mercy were to be doled out, like Poor Law relief, and more granted but under very urgent circumstances. Prohibendo!! W. Spreadm.

In reply to the charge that Chloroform is dangerous in Midwifery though it is not in Surgery, I answer that experience, based upon hundreds of cases, proves that no danger whatever attends its exhibition; provided proper care is taken to have the drug of good quality and to administer it judiciously. This objection is not a religious objection; but it is an important Medical one and I answer it, being able to make so satisfactory a reply. I have myself used it in

seventeen cases of natural labor and I hear witness that while in every instance it entirely freed the patient from pain, in not one was its use accompanied or followed by a single unpleasant symptom. And this I feel assured of, that the deep gratitude of those women for their painless deliveries could not be less acceptable to a merciful God than the horrid shrieks, maiming night hideous, in which, under like circumstances, others express their sufferings.

It is possible that people carry the tone of their mind into the anaesthetic state, as a pickpocket does his into a church; and so it may be that the woman had her sexual feelings excited as mentioned by Paul Dubois. But Mr Graam forgets that the women of this country are virtuous, are pure minded and are by no means to be compared to Parisian [redacted] courtesans. It might be

natural for such a one to be so excited; but not, therefore, for our country women. Because ~~[illegible]~~ burned a temple, who will say the ancient Greeks hated and persecuted and destroyed its work? Because a Paris whore, unworthy of belief, said her sexual desires were roused by Chloroform, who will say that pure minded women can be so affected? Now this is a serious charge, and it would be a valid objection were it true. But fortunately the evidence brought forward in its favour is derived from a source entirely worthless; while the testimony of every one who has used it in Edinburgh and of most people elsewhere, is completely opposed to the existence of this "revolting influence". My own experience is altogether in favour of the latter opinion. Ever since its discovery I have been daily in the habit of seeing it administered or of administering it myself and I cannot

Erostratus

too strongly express my utter disbelief that Chloroform has any such effect. In truth I regard this charge as nothing more than a piece of special pleading and I shall not be ~~surprised~~ surprised if in his next work Mr Lyeam tells us that Chloroform excites the desire to commit Arson or highway robbery.

With the fatal Cases asserted to have taken place from the effects of chloroform this thesis has nothing to do. But one cannot help remarking the strong tendency to amalgamate the post hoc and the propter hoc in connection with these Cases.

The vilificamento of all the ~~old~~ ~~wives~~ stories propagated by the old women of ~~both~~ both Sexes on the subject of Chloroform, taken up from all quarters, without particulars or specification of evidence, ~~is~~ is unworthy arguments credence or attention. Not one of the advocates of Chloroform affirms it has

the power of preventing death: the most enthusiastic votary of anaesthesia in parturition will readily agree with Mr Gream that there are circumstances under which chloroform cannot with advantage be employed. But from this fact we draw the reason for not using it when it is serviceable. To say it cannot always be used, is to say in other words no more than that it is a medicine. For in the whole Materia Medica upon what article can Mr Gream lay his hand and say this is not like chloroform; it can always be exhibited? Upon Opium? Calomel? Antimony? Quina? Iron? To not upon one. Then what does this gentleman mean by an objection so entirely childish. Because he is virtuous shall we not use our medicines? Was such an objection considered valid the use of every drug in the Pharmacopeia must be thrown up. The education of the

profession would be marvellously shortened if these peculiarities and modifying powers of coëxistent circumstances did not exist. Chloroform is a medicine and it is to be used as a medicine: not rashly or indiscriminately, but with care and caution. It is not a specific for all the evils of this life: but it is a valuable step in the progressive amelioration of our condition, which seems to be the most favoured and flourishing object of divine solicitation: and for my own part, I differ so totally from Mr Gream in regard to this agent, that while he looks upon it with distrust, I am disposed to consider it one of the choicest and richest blessings that has been awarded to mankind.

The remarks made upon Mr Gream's pamphlet will for the most part apply to Mr Parkes's, his reasons for opposing Chloroform being

identically the same. Fortunately, in this case, they are expressed concisely and intelligibly; twelve pages taking the place of thirty four with the best results.

Mr Park is, I understand, a highly respectable and experienced practitioner: he is very evidently but extremely prejudiced one. He seems to have the idea that the means now in our power are quite sufficient for all useful purposes and he appears to deprecate the employment of any new ones. In this spirit he opposes Chloroform and draws a comparison between the use of a wineglassful of Prussic acid and the use of Chloroform in labor. This we must treat simply as a case of experience; that is, as Hobbes says, of remembered results, following remembered acts. Now we find that while one is undoubtedly a cause of death in every case, the other is unattended with any danger.

the analogy is absurd; for it is establishing a similarity between the use of an act overdose in the one instance and of an moderate dose in the other. No one dreams of giving a wineglassful of chloroform at once; and even one, on the other hand — which is the fair analogy — gives Prussic acid in small doses in painful digestion.

Mr Park argues against a woman's right to evade the appointed penalty. Now I have shewn by parallel passages and otherwise that the form of expression — in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children — is not a command, over which we have control; but simply a prophetic intimation of the divine ~~will~~ intention, which will be fulfilled irrespective of human caprice. Moreover, I have shewn that were it a command, it signifies neither pain nor muscular efforts; but simply a life of sorrow, of unhappiness of mind.

Mr Park is extremely pathetic on the voluntary abnegation of consciousness by those who take Chloroform. She would fancy, reading his pamphlet, that the world was a pure and sinless calm, that every one in it was patient and enduring, that each moment of every individual's life was well and profitably spent. We know how far otherwise the reality is; and the notion of opposing Chloroform on this ground appears most monstrous. And in connexion with this objection he considers there is a difference between the results of Opium and of Chloroform. But in what this moral difference consists I am at a loss to conceive. The use of Opium in Medicine is to relieve pain and to cause slumber: and, in a moral point ~~of~~ of view, what consequence is the nature of the sleep, provided there are no medical objections. Pain is present in both instances, means are taken to relieve it, and sleep results.

Every anodyne, Calmative and hypnotic in our stores might be objected to on the same grounds. Again it is admitted that ~~three~~ six hours daily suffice for all necessary sleep. But how few take less than eight hours. Surely here is a much greater amount of voluntary abnegation of consciousness than Chloroform occasions. Let Mr Park look to this. It offers an extensive field for moral objections.

God, says Mr Park, would have permitted Chloroform ~~earlier~~ to be discovered earlier if it had been proper for us!

Indeed I am quite embarrassed how to answer this objection. The mental blindness, the absence of the simplest reasoning powers, from prejudice, must be so complete in that man's mind, who could chronicle such an opinion, that I despair, even by the simplest statement, of reaching his understanding. But I will try.

In 1832 the Liverpool and Manchester

Railway was opened. Mr. Park uses this as a means of travelling; yet, how wicked! A Railway, according to his opinion, is opposed to morality. For if it had been proper for us God would have permitted it to be discovered earlier. Quina, Cod liver oil and Iodide of potassium have not been known many years, yet Mr. Park uses them. Now in his view, they are no better than Chloroform; seeing, if they had been good for us, God would have permitted them to be discovered earlier. If the age in which a thing is discovered is a test of its goodness, why was the Electric telegraph only discovered within this year or two, and not six thousand years ago? Does any one, besides Mr. Park, doubt its utility, or consider it a wicked invention? I tell Mr. Park, that none but himself thinks so; and I say moreover, that however men may doubt it, all things are discovered at the proper period, because appointed by God; that in

future time, when a discovery is made he will do wrong to oppose it upon such foolish grounds. Further, if God would not permit it to be discovered before, his wicked article, why has he permitted it to be discovered now? I agree that nothing is discovered without God's consent. Chloroform has been discovered and the corollary is obvious.

But this opposition only illustrates what I have said before regarding the progressive nature of all knowledge. It is natural that great blessings should have small attendant evils: and it would, I think, be true philosophy to consider this as in some measure a result of the very curse which we have spoken. Perfect and unalloyed good is the gift of God alone: We mortals cannot and ought not to expect it. And as reasonable would it be to attack the use of Railways and of the

Electric Telegraph, because they have injured mail Coaches, as to abuse Chloroform for temporarily abolishing the mental powers.

Both Mr Spream and Mr Pank pay great attention to the difference between the occasional, and systematic use of Chloroform; and between the amelioration and obliteration of pain. But one answer will do for both. What should we think of the Physician, who, when called in to a patient in the agonies of a painful disease should give enough medicine to relieve a part only and should still leave a moderate amount unnoticed and uncared for. Would such a course be right or reasonable? Certainly not. If the great pain is ahead thing, so is the little pain: if a moderate amount of pain is a salutary manifestation of life force*, so is a great amount.

I know not whether Mr Pank really means what he says at the

* Dr. Meigs.

eleventh page; namely, "because the Almighty chooses in his wisdom to act in a certain way, we are not called upon to do the same." But must say amen horrible doctrine never was broached. Our powers of doing good must be derived from God; and being so derived they must partake of the attributes of their origin. Every good act done by man is only so inasfar as it is done by the grace of the Holy Spirit working within him and urging him to imitate the course and follow at a vast distance in the footsteps of the Son of God.

A word more concerning a passage from the Bible upon which Mr. Parks lays great stress.

Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness with sobriety.

I say amen to this. Though I differ somewhat from Mr. Parks in

my Reading of it.

For surely God will save by means? Then why may not Chloroform be the answer to the petition? Is it less the gift of God because it did not, as Manna in an older time, drop immediately from heaven, but mediately was discovered by the genius God bestowed upon man?

In My mind's eye I see a woman, the Conjugata diameter of whose pelvis measures only three inches; while the smallest diameter of the Child's head is three inches and a half. Now in the spirit of Mr Park's exegesis of the above passage, this poor woman is to be permitted to offer any prayers for her deliverance; but when assistance is tendered in the form of instrumental interference, you are told that if she continue in faith she shall be saved in Childbearing: forgetting that with God's help Embryulcia and Chloroform in such a case is a perfect

answer to her prayer.

Again I see another in a like situation! Continuing in faith, her prayers are heard. And lo! One appears, bearing in his hand a thing, the gift of God, more potent than opium or mandragora. Then she was laboring in a dreadd extremity: Now suffering no more than the pleasing punishment that woman bear.

I discover myself as one having a poor opinion of Mr. Parks magetical powers.

"It shall with exceedingly great pride and rashnesse in Machiavell that he dare speake and write of the affaires of warre and prescribe precepts and rules unto them which are of that profession, seeing hee had nothing but by hearesay: and was himself a but a simple Secretaris, or Town Clarke, which is a trade as different from

the profession of warre, as ane harquebush differs from ane pen and inkhorn. Herein it fals out to Machiavell, as it did once to the philosopher Phormio; who one day reading in the Peripatetikes schoole of Greece, and seeing arrive and enter thither Annibal of Carthage (brought by some of his friends to hear the eloquence of the Philosopher) hee began to speake and to dispute (with much babbling) of the laws of warre and of the duties of a great Captaine, before this most famous Captaine which had forgotten more than that philosopher ever knew or had learned. Now when hee had ended his lecture and goodly disputation, as Annibal went from the auditorie one of his friends, which had brought him thither, demanded what hee thought of the philosopher's eloquence and

gallant speacha? To whoma Annibal raplyed: Truly I have in my lifetima seana many eldarly females, but I never saw so old a woman as this Phormio."

I have end my thesis. I have discussed the general principles of the case and their special application. The subject is an important one; inasmuch as it involves a charge of quackery and irreligion against many members of any profession.

The choice of a subject for a thesis is a difficult one; and I prefer to think that the one I have selected will atone for the defects of the author.

I feal a great satisfaction in thinking that ultimately truth must prevail: it is derived from God and shares his attribute of immortality. Other things may come and go but truth is ever advancing. Upon Man's banner is written aword, "Excelsior,"

and his course is still upward
and upward. The feeling of self-
reliance, so necessary for self-
development, is spreading; the highly
wrought antagonism of the present
age is favorable to our progress; man
is becoming acquainted with his
destiny and ~~[illegible]~~ strives more to perform
his duty; He has done much and
eminent results have followed from
his labors.
All things confess his strength; through the cold mass
Of marble and of color his dreams pass;
Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes
their children wear:
Language is a perpetual orphic song;
Which rules with dædal harmony the throng
Of thoughts, and forms, which else senseless
and shapeless were:
The lightning is his slave; Heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep,
They pass before his eyes, are numbered
and roll on:
The tempest is his steed; he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts, from her depth laid bare,

Heaven! hast thou secrets? Man unveils me:
I have none.

That all the world had a true sense of the giant power for good and for evil with which we are endowed. For then would justice and truth prevail and the desire to do good and to discover truth animate every breast: then would the fulfilment of your creator's spirit as far as mortals can carry out the spirit of the Eternal, be the unexceptionless rule throughout the lands length and breadth.

Heaven speed the day when all shall do this in sincerity and in disinterestedness. Meanwhile may the success they deserve be the lot of those who even now are engaged in the good work.

Ble.

Soon after the discovery of Chloroform I wrote to my father upon the subject of the religious objections, and in reply received from him the following letter. Coming from one of consummate learning, of real powers of mind and a constant student of the Bible I regard it as of real importance. Indeed if the opinion of men, who are competent to judge received proper attention, Dr Chalmers' remark about the small theologians and this letter might to settle the matter. Especially when opposed only by men, who, alike by mental qualifications, by education and by pursuits, are unfitted for appreciating an opinion upon such a subject.

December, 1847.

My dear Francis,

Lay this fact to your heart whether a great fact, a middle sized fact, or a little fact I know not, but a fact it is that between sending a letter to Astrachan, or to the Duarim of

Muscat and sending a letter to your shoe-
maker in George Street Edinburgh, the
difference, as to trouble of body, as to anxiety
of mind and indeed as to postage is
next door to nothing. The shoemaker,
it is true, receives your letter, if once
it is lodged in the post office, without
further trouble on your part. But so does
this Highup of Muscat. The true point of
difficulty is — (and in that stage of the
transaction the shoemaker costs you quite
as much trouble as the Imaum) first of
all to reach the post office. Nice labour
now Imaust. And for us especially it is
so. The interval remember between us
and this particular post office at Lapwade-
(meaning by interval the total distance
of to and fro, outward and homeward
voyage) is a good three miles.
Hence any delay, and also from this
other cause; that having mislaid
your jotting of doubts and queries, I had
lost the only guide to my own replies
and suggestions.

I. As to Dr Simpson's citation from the

dramatic poet Middleton, I feel satisfied (from the internal evidence) that it is genuine. The only demur connects itself with the date - 1654 - (If You are right in reporting that as the date it puzzles me.) What motive or encouragment could a publisher have for bringing out any Book connected with the Stage between 1640 and 1660? Cromwell died in 1658 and certainly the period of his Protectorate was not the gloomiest of that puritanical Vicennium, but it was gloomy enough. There was no motive of gain at that time, and there might be some dangers in publishing what were viewed as wicked books by the dominant party.

II. But why should there be any difficulty as to Middleton's having noticed a fact, which Dr. Simpson, I think, shews, (but here I am speaking from memory) to have been known amongst the Greek Physicians?

Medicine was much attended to by the literary men of the 17th Century: for instance the use of friction, the application of the metallic tractors, as practised 40 or 50 years ago by the American empiric — all this was elaborately anticipated by Greatorex in Charles II d's Reign. He again had certainly been anticipated by Greeks and Romans. Somewhere in Plautus, I remember a jesting allusion to the medical treatment by traction, in which allusion the adverb Attractim seems as part of the expression. And subsequently I remember to have met with cryptical allusions to most of the medical raving, which we regard as most peculiarly of modern growth, in Greek writers before the 9th Century of our æra. I must also have pointed out to you the still more singular fact that Hahnemann's doctrines (not as to

infinitesimal doses but) as to Homœopathy and Allœopathy is most distinctly stated and ably exemplified by Milton about 1641 – viz: in the preface to his Samson Agonistes. It is clear that Milton had reflected deeply on Physiology, and other branches of your splendid and infinite profession.

Any reader of this assertion will naturally be startled even more by the situation of such a strange hypothesis, than by its authorship – by its local connexion with a Hebrew Tragedy, than by its personal connexion with Milton. Strange enough in all conscience that a great poet of the 17th Century should anticipate the German medical innovator of the 19th Century; but stranger still, that for a medical or physiological hypothesis, this great poet should have devised no more suitable situation than in a critical dissertation on the principles

of art, concerned in the Greek tragic drama. So it is however; and really the Miltonic Hahnemannism is more satisfactory than the Miltonic criticism on Grecian Art. Those difficult questions that arise upon the Greek ideas of tragedy are but grazed or ruffled upon the surface. True there was not room for doing much more - But then the room was even less that was disposeable for Hahnemann = and yet in the very few words uttered, a most comprehensive outline of the doctrine is sketched, which scarcely allows of improvement. Further in the introduction of this radical digression, after all, so violent an intrusion as one imagines before hand. It arises naturally enough upon the well known but obscure passage in Aristotle, ascribing to Tragedy the office of purifying the passions by ministration of pity and terror. The first datum of any note upon this passage is -

"How? — purify a passion by a passion?"
"Why yes — and so?" is Hahnemann's
reply. It seems a strange rationale
of medical practice; but in effect it
is the very logic nature prompts us
to, in the treatment of our own bodily
morbid affections. For in a diarrhoea
we do not proceed by introducing
a counter agency, but a similar
agency. We do not curb the diarrhoea:
on the contrary we ~~[illegible]~~
mimic the natural diarrhoea by
an artificial diarrhoea through
medicine. Again if a man suffers
from a morbid discharge of blood,
is it the policy of medicine violently
to restrain that discharge? Far
from it. The first step is to bleed
the patient. The morbid haem-
orrhage is attacked by an artificial
haemorrhage, which often succeeds
in re-establishing the disordered
system. That is to say <u>pathic</u> or
morbid affections are redressed
by <u>homoiopathic</u>, similar affections

and not by allopathic, affections of an alien nature.

What strange vagaries does literature present! Strange almost as those of nature.

Now, as regards the monstrous objections, calling themselves religious, to Dr Simpson's immortal discovery (which discovery I should think will be found to have done more for human comfort, and for the mitigation of animal suffering, than any other discovery whatever!). The Doctors new arguments seem quite sufficient. In the same spirit as these arguments might be suggested such as the following.

I. Three score years and ten. This is the limit assigned to human life in the Psalms. Consequently in the logical of these "religious" Cavillers, it must be impious to prescribe for a man of 80. And the whole Science of Macrobiotics must rank with witchcraft and Necromancy

in point of wickedness. Lord Bacon thought otherwise.

II. "Poverty shall never cease from the land". Ergo, it must be profane to attempt the limitation of poverty: and absolutely blasphemous to effect its extirpation, as was once done in the New England states and elsewhere.

III. "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth." Dr. Simpson's improved interpretation of the Hebrew word, making it to indicate the muscular uterine exertion which attends parturition, (and attends it so pre-eminently in the human female) rather than to indicate the pain generally connected with this exertion, seems quite sufficient for the occasion. Another argument suggests itself: viz: that if all pain when carried to the stage which we call agony (or intense struggle amongst vital functions) brings with it some danger to life (as I presume must be the case) then it will follow — that knowingly to

reject a means of mitigating, or wholly cancelling the danger; now that such a means has been discovered and tested, travels on the road towards suicide. If I am right in supposing a danger to life, lying in this direction, then clearly the act of rejecting the remedy, being wilful, lies in a suicidal direction. It is even worse than an ordinary movement in that direction; because it makes God an accomplice, through the Scriptures, in this suicidal movement; nay the primal instigator to it by means of a supposed Curse interdicting the use of any means whatever (though revealed by Himself) for annulling that Curse.

This turns the tables on the Religiosity people; landing them in the guilt of abetting what will be henceforward be regarded as a step towards suicide — viz: by abetting the rejection of a known anodyne, potent enough to reduce

the chances of a fatal issue.
IV. On the argument which would forbid the use of this almost magical anodyne, all the prophylactic means hitherto used for lessening the violence of symptoms in parturition must have been lawful only in the inverse ratio of their efficacy. To be altogether clear of guilt, the means used must be confessedly and altogether ineffective. I do not pretend to any knowledge upon this subject — but I have a general impression that bleeding and other means are employed in long stages antecedent to child-birth, for the purpose of disarming the symptoms beforehand of their violence, and preparing an easier course of dilatation, as well as an easier delivery. Now, if so, what wretches these practitioners must suddenly discover themselves to have been! Do they fancy that it is any different offence to disarm

a sting partially and before hand, from that newly discovered offence of plucking out the sting completely at the moment of its hostile action?! Is their only excuse for this long series of crime, that after all, their work was done imperfectly? That they failed to give relief — is that their plea? My advice to these villains is — to remember the old argument — "In for a penny, in for a pound": they are already up to the lips in guilt: let them therefore like Sensible reprobates, go the whole hog by patronising Chloroform. V. There is a case parallel to this in the popish Codes of Casuistry. Is it not a scriptural doctrine that we should mortify the flesh? Certainly it is. The Protestant denies it. And upon that argument many a pining woman in Convents, with the sanction of her directors and confessors, has founded a reputation for Saintliness upon the practice

of swallowing the most revolting selections of filth. Southey illustrated a shocking case of that nature in the Quarterly Review. But in the Dublin newspapers, and I think about the same time, occurred a case of the same kind, that terminated in consequences, over which no veils of cloister secrecy could be drawn. A young girl, under some popish superstition, ate large quantities of the earth around the grave of some Priest who had died in the odor of sanctity. This odor, meantime, had not availed to banish the larvae of some noisome beetles. These established themselves in the poor girls intestines. A dreadful illness ensued with what final result I do not remember. Now this mode of mortifying the flesh by positive diet; viz: by eating vermin, resembles the present anti-chloroform mode of mortifying the flesh by

negative acts - viz; by abstaining from Chloroform, in the final consequences: both modes augment the chance of death, and therefore load with the guilt of suicide those who knowingly become parties to either. The two practices are akin also in this — that both have drawn specious support from superstition — both plead scriptural words for practices that are essentially unscriptural.

VI. Dr. Simpson's notice of the exemption from the worst sufferings of Child-birth enjoyed by some races of women is much strengthened by various Polynesian experiences. I fancy that Ellis notices these cases in his Polynesian Researches. In a separate work (not by Ellis,) on the particular Island of Tonga (i.e. Tonga taboo, or Tonga the Sacred) I remember a case of total immunity from pain or even momentary lassitude in a native woman during parturition.

VII. Now, addressing myself no longer to everybody, but to you in particular, I am of opinion that your own exegesis or suggestion for a proper exegesis of the original curse – is plausible, and will be thought so by Dr. Simpson. To VI argues that the curse is not unconditional, but is perhaps dependant on conditions of diet, of habits engrafted on civilization &c. Once removed the curse loses its sanctity. Dr. Simpson again by his new ~~version~~ version of the Hebrew word, so transmutes the whole bearings of the passage, as to ~~connect~~ disconnect it from all liability to these religious scruples against Chloroform in Childbirth: nothing is disturbed by the Chloroform that ever was fixed by the primal decree. Last, comes your own suggestion, which while retaining the curse, evades it by a new interpretation. If it were said, "In sorrow shalt thou eat thy bread"–

we should not understand the sorrow as settling upon the act of taking food, which on the contrary is one of the commonest enjoyments of life; but we should understand that life itself as a general function of the body, was described by one of its most general necessities. — So also in this case you understand the curse addressed to woman; being simply that she, not less than her partner man, should sorrow through life. But life in her is described by a variation of phrase suited to her sexual differences. In man it had been expressed by his peculiar and separate form of activity; viz: by labor applied to the creation of food. In woman the characteristic and differential form of activity being applied — not to the gaining of a livelihood — but to the necessities, cares, innumerable duties connected with the bringing into the world and

the rearing of children, the expression of the curse has varied itself correspondingly. The two modes of expression vary with the sex: but the thing expressed is exactly the same; viz: the whole tenor of life; denoted in each by the function which lies upon the surface and strikes the understanding as most distinguishing. It might have been said, with the same exact meaning — to man, "Thou shalt plough the ground in sorrow" — to woman, "Thou shalt spin the garments of thy household in sorrow": but the scriptural expression has settled upon still wider forms for indicating most comprehensively the process of life. The curse therefore, is by you to read as to extend itself to life generally; and not as limiting itself to the sources of sorrow involved in the production of children. But lastly if the curse were so limited; I say, if the curse were understood as limited to the

evils arising through maternity, why should those evils be contemplated as lying chiefly in the very ~~transitory~~ transient and physical act of parturition? Agonizing as the sufferings from childbirth have occasionally proved (as many great obstetric surgeons have assured us), expressing their fury sometimes by sudden lunacy the most frantic, sometimes by infanticide unconscious or semi conscious —— Consequences that henceforth are doomed to subside as the billows of the tormented Red Sea before the uplifted Rod of Aaron's Son, —— still these sufferings are transitory as compared with the life long fears, cares, and trepidations connected with the rearing training, and disposal of children. There lies the sorrow; there is the opening for a real curse; viz: in the moral and not in the mere physical woe; in the moral woe that lasts through a life time; and

not in the physical woe that after a few days' fearful heaving and convulsion is hushed into a deep rest from the storm — either that rest which lies in restoration to health, or in the deeper rest which lies in the Sabbath of death.

VIII. If it were possible that, in this age of the world, religious scruples such as those now passed in review could maintain their ground, it is certain that a conflict absolutely without precedent, and shocking to contemplate, would arise between the scrupulous practitioner and his patients. A general knowledge of the new anodyne, and of its instantaneous efficacy will be diffused with a rapidity corresponding to the extensive field of its application. The whole female sex have within a few weeks come into possession of a great inheritance, of a talisman, suddenly as it were, revealed to them; and the powers of

this talisman apply themselves
to the very class of cases that naturally
besiege the terrified imaginations
of females beyond all others. A
new anchor has been made known,
fitted for the special order of storms
that are the most widely appalling
to females, as being the Catholic
inheritance of their sex. This they
will now demand when suffering
infirmity. To refuse would be
to create scenes the most dreadful
of fend between the Medical
attendant and his patients. The
issue of such feuds could not be
long doubtful. But in the meantime
they would create a scandal
shocking to a profession of gentlemen.
IX. And finally, is there any real
religious scruple at the bottom of
these objections? Is it not a jealousy
of Professor Simpson's great discovery
that really speaks through this
jesuitical masquerade of conscientious
scruples? Thomas de Quincey.